

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3634

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

JOHANNESBURG 1.

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0643

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: VORSTER TELLS EMPLOYERS FEDERATION GOVT'S LABOR
POLICY IS NO DETERRENT TO JOB ADVANCEMENT FOR
NON-WHITES

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER VORSTER PERSONALLY SPELLED OUT GOVT'S
LABOR POLICY ON MANPOWER USE IN CAPE TOWN SPEECH OPENING ANNUAL
CONFERENCE OF MOTOR INDUSTRIES FEDERATION OCTOBER 3, AND DECLARED
THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT EMPLOYERS, WITH COOPERATION OF TRADE
UNIONS, FROM TAKING NECESSARY STEPS TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS
IN PRODUCTIVE UTILIZATION OF NON-WHITE LABOR.

2. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED PRI MIN AS SAYING GOVT WAS NOT AGAINST
NON-WHITES MOVING INTO JOB CATEGORIES FOR WHICH THEY WOULD REQUIRE
HIGHER SKILLS AND IN WHICH THEY COULD EARN HIGHER WAGES; AND
THAT GOVT WAS FULLY AWARE THAT IT WOULD BE OF LITTLE AVAIL
IF SUCH NEW OPPORTUNITIES WERE TO BE OPENED UP BUT NON-WHITES
WERE NOT EQUIPPED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM BECAUSE OF LACK
OF SUITABLE TRAINING. HE POINTED OUT GOVERNMENT GAVE PRIVATE
INDUSTRY TRAINING PROJECTS FINANCIAL SUPPORT, AND AN INTER-
DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE HAD BEEN APPOINTED UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP
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OF THE SECRETARY FOR BANTU EDUCATION TO DETERMINE NEED FOR

TRAINING FACILITIES FOR AFRICAN WORKERS IN APPROVED CATEGORIES IN WHITE AREAS AND TO RECOMMEND WAYS IN WHICH GOVT COULD ASSIST IN PROVIDING SUCH FACILITIES.

3. PRESS ALSO REPORTED PRIMIN AS SAYING THERE HAD BEEN NUMBER OF INSTANCES IN WHICH IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF NON-WHITE AND CONSEQUENTLY ALSO WHITE LABOR, CITING AGREEMENTS EARLIER THIS YEAR BETWEEN MINING INDUSTRY AND SEVERAL TRADE UNIONS, PROGRESS MADE BY RAILWAYS OVER NUMBER OF YEARS, AND MOST RECENTLY THE REVISED AGREEMENT ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL FOR THE IRON, STEEL, ENGINEERING AND METALLURGICAL INDUSTRIES. "SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS ON ADVANCEMENT OF NON-WHITE WORKERS EXEMPLIFIED IN THESE INSTANCES GO LONG WAY TO PROVE THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WITH WHICH WHITE WORKERS ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS AND BODE WELL FOR OTHER EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE GOOD SENSE TO USE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS TOWARDS ACHIEVING ORDERLY CHANGE."

4. PRIMIN DECLARED GOVT'S LABOR POLICY COULD BE SAID TO REST BROADLY ON FOLLOWING PRINCIPLE: TO MAINTAIN INDUSTRIAL PEACE BY PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL SECTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S GROWING, ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION, WHILE ENCOURAGING MOST EFFICIENT USE OF THE COUNTRY'S AVAILABLE MANPOWER IN ORDERLY FASHION AND WITH COOPERATION OF TRADE UNIONS. HE ADDED THAT MAIN INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING GOVERNMENT'S GOALS WAS THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION ACT WHICH PROVIDED FOR A SYSTEM OF SELF GOVERNMENT IN INDUSTRY THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIAL COUNCILS. HAVING PROVIDED STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, GOVT WISHED TO KEEP ITSELF OUT OF ACTUAL BARGAINING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE AND TRIED TO ADVANCE THE MORE PRODUCTIVE UTILIZATION OF LABOR MAINLY THROUGH THE TRAINING FACILITIES IT PROVIDED AND SUPPORT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

5. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE GOVT WAS NOT AGAINST CHANGED IN LABOR PATTERN WHICH CAME ABOUT IN APPROVED WAY, IT WOULD NOT FORCE WHITE WORKERS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS ON TRADITIONAL WORK IF THEY FELT THIS WOULD UNDERMINE THEIR JOB SECURITY.

6. ON OTHER SUBJECTS MR. VORSTER REPORTEDLY TOLD THE CONFERENCE UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT SOUTH AFRICA FACED MANY PROBLEMS BUT HE FELT THAT MANY OF THOSE IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD WHO WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT THE COUNTRY HAD MORE PROBLEMS THAN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF, AND THAT THE GOVT WOULD MAINTAIN STABILITY REGARDLESS OF CRITICISM FROM OUTSIDE. HE ALSO NOTED THERE WERE INDICATIONS PRESENT ECONOMIC UPSURGE WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL THE END OF 1974 OR LATER.

7. CAPE TIMES EDITORIAL THIS MORNING WELCOMED PRIMIN'S

ASSURANCE THAT GOVT WOULD NOT BE AGAINST JOB ADVANCEMENT
FOR BLACKS AND CONTRASTED POSITIVE TONE OF HIS REMARKS
WITH THE "NARRO-MINDED" UTTERANCES OF SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES
AND SUBORDINATES AT POLITICAL RALLIES.

8. PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT, ADDRESSING SAME OPENING MEETING
OF MOTOR INDUSTRIES FEDERATION, AND IN PRESENCE PRIMIN,
PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN MOTOR INDUSTRY EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION,
E.J. KEEVILL, SAID SOUTH AFRICANS ARE RAPIDLY REACHING ECONOMIC
ADULTHOOD AND SHOULD SOON BE RID OF MANY GROWING PAINS, AND
THAT ERA OF JOB RESERVATION IS RAPIDLY DRAWING TO A CLOSE. HE
DECLARED THAT NO WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO RELY
ON THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN TO ENSURE FOR HIM A PARTICULAR JOB OR
OCCUPATION AND THAT CRITERIA FOR USE OF WHITES IN MORE PRODUCTIVE
OCCUPATIONS WHOULD BE GREATER SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ADAPTABILITY
TO CHANGING CONDITIONS.
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